

**W**here are my cheerleaders!" Despite the soundstage's cacophony of voices and the shuffle of men moving equipment, his *basso profundo* is unmistakable. Sporting futuristic armorplate, his blond mane dusting his shoulders, the 6'6", 305-pound colossus strides past the costumers, stunt coordinator, producers, and director—each of whom urgently requires consultation with him.

Instead, he approaches two ladies standing beyond the set: Linda, his wife of eight years, and their preschool daughter, Brooke. Sweeping the tot off her feet, he cradles and kisses her as if she were a tiny Barbie doll.

Terry Gene Bollea aka Hulk Hogan has arrived.

The 37-year-old, hazel-eyed heavy-weight may be best known for his body-slamming antics, but Hogan is actually a nice guy as long as he stays calm, which does not seem to be in the cards today. With **Suburban Commando**'s most intricate combat sequence about to be lensed, the spine-cracking side of Hogan is about to appear.

"I'm going to be mean, but I'm trying to stay away from my wrestling per-

and Christopher Lloyd. Then he's chased by the villainous General Suitor, who's clobbered at the end of the film.

"Now if people say, 'Oh, that's the Hulkster,' this movie won't work. So I'm trying to play the role differently." When the makeup is complete, Hogan jumps up and rejoins his family.

The time is just after 11 AM, when shooting was scheduled to begin, but the feverish bustle of crew activity suggests they are not even close. Talking with a gaggle of TV reporters and magazine writers, who have descended on a nondescript brick building in Santa Monica's warehouse section to report on **Commando**'s lensing, reveals the delay's reason. The fight scene requires Hogan, with the help of rocket boots, to blast up through the elevator shaft on the bridge of General Suitor's ship, then engage a detachment of alien guards. Sounds easy, right?

Wrong. The scene will combine a series of difficult shots, each of which must be executed precisely as planned to insure continuity. Three cameras will shutter simultaneously from different angles, capturing a series of fx which are unpredictable and

## SPACED OUT IN THE DOWN-TO-EARTH COSMIC CRACK-UP SUBURBAN COMMANDO

sonality, man," he says about his character, as two female makeup specialists, armed with powder pancakes and pencils, take the place of his wife and daughter. Unexpectedly, he pretends to grope the masccaramaidens' breasts, and elicits a much-needed laugh from the harried crew.

"If I use my wrestling expressions, I'd go way over the top, and people would lose sight of my character, Shep Ramsey. See, he's *not* a wrestler! He's an intergalactic warrior who takes an extraterrestrial vacation, gets stranded on earth, and rents a room from two suburbanites, played by Shelley Duvall

expensive to reshoot.

Huddling near the bridge, built from remnants of **Star Trek** and **Captain EO** sets, **Commando**'s techno-wizards confer about what remains to be done. They have already wired the elevator with gerbs (beads of explosive zirconium) for Hogan's fiery entrance, but the electronic trigger device still has to be rigged.

When the pow-wow breaks up, the two chiefs, Charles (**The Abyss**) Belardinelli and Thomas (**Die Hard 2**) Bellissimo—who look and sound like the Smothers Brothers of celluloid snap, crackle, and pop—seem more

Hulk Hogan as Shep Ramsey, extraterrestrial warrior. LEFT: Hogan with his landlord, Christopher Lloyd, and son, Mark Wilcox. RIGHT: General Suitor in his alien guise.







relaxed.

"This next scene requires Hulk to jump through the explosives without protective garb," they explain. "Normally we would use a stuntman, but Hulk wanted to do it. So the key is to get him out of the way before we really let go. After all, we don't want to make him mad at us."

"This is nothing," interrupts Hogan, thundering by as he searches out stunt coordinator David (**Revenge**) Cass for a last-minute conference. "The scene we did a few weeks ago, when I first fight General Suitor—now *that* was bad. I'm hanging in an elevator shaft, I cut the car loose, and hold on to the cable that's left. Only problem was that the elevator dropped a lot faster than we expected. But I wasn't worried," the he-man chuckles. "If something had happened, I'd have flown away."

A production assistant mans a smoke machine, ready to fill the set with artificial smog after the explosion. Nearby, firemen and police stand ready. Required by California law whenever pyrotechnics are performed, they are empowered to stop the shoot in case of life-threatening danger.

Meanwhile, construction personnel have their work cut out for them. Although the elevator shaft from which Hogan enters the bridge does not actually exist, partial walls have been erected, as has the overhead girder which he grasps while kicking in the elevator's doors. In addition, part of the set's floor must be darkened to simulate the elevator's abysmal shaft. A female crew member rapidly creates the forced-perspective illusion with rollers, brushes, and paint.

Under the guidance of stunt coordinator Cass, Hogan rehearses his moves at half speed, providing a preview of things to come. The director Burt (**War Wagon**) Kennedy watches, calculating camera angles, while prop assistants scramble to position mattresses which will cushion the flying stuntmen. Soon, Hogan and his combatants are ready, the camera crew is ready, and the director is ready—but the shaft is *still* not ready.

The time is 2:30 PM, and as Hogan retreats to his trailer, the film's producer, Howard (**Network**) Gottfried, makes a beeline for the feverishly working painter. "Hulk had to cancel his 2:30 workout for this shot, and *you're* not ready!" he fumes. Holding back her tears, the laborer retreats to

the ladies' room, returning moments later to finish her job.

Places are called. At Kennedy's command, the cameras roll. Suddenly, the elevator doors burst open with a concerto of explosions. Popping off their hinges, the portals thwack to the ground, showering the set with sparks. Hogan emerges from the shaft and glares at his opponent.

"And cut!" The action, which took about ten seconds, went so well that another take is not needed. The acrid odor of smoldering gunpowder remains as the crew prepares the next shot. No one touches the debris of the smashed elevator doors; it must be left in place for the sake of continuity.

A fourth camera is rigged, while the other three are rearranged. The addition will shoot the upcoming fight scene at 64 frames per second—as opposed to the normal 24—so that when projected, the footage will be in slow motion. Preparations under way, Hogan chats with an eight-year-old boy, the son of a crewmember. The two pose for photographs, holding a mock contest to outdo each other's growl.

After finishing with the child, the bicep-blaster again confers with the



stunt coordinator. They practice the upcoming sequence through a kind of synergistic interchange.

Moments later, the fight scene is ready for shuttering. Hogan throws his daughter the thumbs-up sign and takes his place. An assistant director approaches the child and explains that because daddy will not actually be fighting, she should not be frightened. The AD's concern is not simply for the little girl; with the crew shooting sync sound, *any* off-set noises will spoil the take.

Hogan stands before the destroyed  
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